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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A plastic container defining a central axis, the container comprising:
- a substantially cylindrical sidewall;
 - a base attached to a lower portion of the sidewall;
 - a finish attached to an upper portion of the sidewall;
 - a vacuum panel located in the sidewall, the vacuum panel comprising an upper panel portion, a lower panel portion, and a middle panel portion, wherein the upper panel portion and the lower panel portion are located radially closer to the central axis than is the middle panel portion;
 - a raised island protruding from the vacuum panel and surrounded by the vacuum panel, cross sectional areas of the island being defined as areas in horizontal planes of the container[[:]] , the island comprising:
 - an upper island portion ~~of the island~~;
 - a middle island portion ~~of the island~~ adjacent to the upper island portion; and
 - a lower island portion ~~of the island~~ adjacent to the middle island portion;
 - wherein a cross sectional area of the middle island portion is less than a cross sectional area of the upper island portion and less than a cross sectional area of the lower island portion.

2. (Original) The container of claim 1, wherein the island is a peanut shape.

3. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 1, wherein the middle island portion is a substantially horizontal rib that has a depth in a radial direction of the container that is less than a depth, in the radial direction, of one of the upper island portion and the lower island portion.

4. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 3, wherein the depth of the middle island portion is less than one half of the depth of one of the upper island portion and the lower island portion.

5. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 4, wherein the depth of the middle island portion is less than one third of the depth of one of the upper island portion and the lower island portion.

6. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 5, wherein the depth of the middle island portion is less than one quarter of the depth of one of the upper island portion and the lower island portion.

7. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 1, wherein the raised island is bisected by the middle island portion.

8. (Original) The container of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of vacuum panels spaced symmetrically around the sidewall.

9. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 8, wherein each of the vacuum panels has a raised island protruding there from and surrounded thereby, cross sectional areas of the island being defined as areas in horizontal planes of the container, each island having

an upper island portion;

a middle island portion adjacent to the upper island portion; and

a lower island portion adjacent to the middle island portion;

wherein a cross sectional area of the middle island portion is less than a cross sectional area of the upper island portion and less than a cross sectional area of the lower island portion.

10. (Original) The container of claim 1, wherein the vacuum panel has two vertical ribs.

11. (Original) The container of claim 10, wherein the vertical ribs are indentations in the vacuum panel.

12. (Original) The container of claim 11, wherein the island is located between the vertical ribs.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of reducing deformation in a plastic container, the method comprising:

providing the container with a substantially cylindrical sidewall defining a central axis;

providing the container with a base attached to a lower portion of the sidewall;

providing a finish attached to an upper portion of the sidewall;

providing a vacuum panel located in the sidewall, the vacuum panel comprising an upper panel portion, a lower panel portion, and a middle panel portion, wherein the upper panel portion and the lower panel portion are located radially closer to the central axis than is the middle panel portion;

providing a raised island protruding from the vacuum panel and surrounded by the vacuum panel, cross sectional areas of the island being defined as areas in horizontal planes of the container;

providing an upper island ~~portion of the island~~;

providing a middle island ~~portion of the island~~ adjacent to the upper island portion; and

providing a lower island ~~portion of the island~~ adjacent to the middle island portion;

wherein a cross sectional area of the middle island portion is less than a cross sectional area of the upper island portion and less than a cross sectional area of the lower island portion.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the island provided in a peanut shape.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the middle island portion is provided as a substantially horizontal rib that has a depth in a radial direction of the container that is less than a depth, in the radial direction, of one of the upper island portion and the lower island portion.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the depth of the middle island portion is less than one half of the depth of one of the upper island portion and the lower island portion.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the raised island is bisected by the middle island portion.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, further comprising providing a plurality of vacuum panels spaced symmetrically around the sidewall, wherein each of the vacuum panels is provided with a raised island protruding there from and surrounded thereby, cross sectional areas of the island being defined as areas in horizontal planes of the container, each island having

an upper island portion;

a middle island portion adjacent to the upper island portion; and
a lower island portion adjacent to the middle island portion;
wherein a cross sectional area of the middle island portion is less than a cross sectional area of the upper island portion and less than a cross sectional area of the lower island portion.

19. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the vacuum panel is provided with two vertical ribs, the vertical ribs being indentations in the vacuum panel, and the island is located between the vertical ribs.

20. (Currently Amended) A plastic container defining a central axis, the container comprising:
a substantially cylindrical sidewall having an exterior surface;
a base attached to a lower portion of the sidewall;
a finish attached to an upper portion of the sidewall;
a vacuum panel located in the sidewall, the vacuum panel comprising an upper panel portion, a lower panel portion, and a middle panel portion, wherein the upper panel portion and the lower panel portion are located radially closer to the central axis than is the middle panel portion; and
a raised island protruding from the vacuum panel and surrounded by the vacuum panel, the island defined by left and right borders that delimit the island from the vacuum panel,

the island including an upper island portion, a middle island portion adjacent to the upper island portion, and a lower island portion adjacent to the middle island portion;

wherein a first distance extends horizontally along the exterior surface of the upper island portion ~~of the island~~ between the left border and the right border, a second distance extends horizontally along the exterior surface of the lower island portion ~~of the island~~ between the left border and the right border, and a third distance extends horizontally along the exterior surface of the middle island portion ~~of the island~~ between the left border and the right border, with the third distance being less than the first distance and less than the second distance.

21. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 20, wherein the raised island is a peanut shape.

22. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 20, wherein the middle island portion is a substantially horizontal rib.

23. (Currently Amended) The container of claim 20, wherein the raised island is bisected by the middle island portion.

24. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 20, further comprising a plurality of vacuum panels spaced symmetrically around the sidewall, wherein each of the vacuum panels has a raised island protruding there from.

25. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 20, wherein the vacuum panel has two vertical ribs.

26. (Previously Presented) The container of claim 25, wherein the vertical ribs are indentations in the vacuum panel.